

REMARKS

Claims 12-29 are pending in this application. By this amendment, claim 12 is amended. The amendment introduces no new matter. Reconsideration of the application based on the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Office Action makes final the Restriction and Election of Species Requirements. As such, claims 15-17, 19-21 and 26-28 are provisionally withdrawn from consideration.

Applicants respectfully reassert that the subject matter of all of the claims and species are sufficiently related that a thorough search for the subject matter of any one Group of claims and/or species would encompass a search for the subject matter of the remaining claims and species. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the Restriction and Election of Species Requirements are again respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 12, 14, 18, 23 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,798,076 to Ladouce in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,382,402 to Espie et al. (hereinafter "Espie"); and rejects claims 13, 22 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ladouce in view of Espie and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,512,006 to Wood et al. (hereinafter "Wood"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

According to the molding process disclosed in Ladouce, a strip consists of an elongated metal sheet that is spirally wound in a recess defined by the flat face, the frustoconical face, and two cylindrical faces (see col. 2, lines 39-45 of Ladouce). Edges of the strip are machined to reach the profile of the sidewall portion (see col. 2, lines 51-65). As such, the Office Action's assertion that Ladouce teaches a manufacturing method of a laminated mold comprising a laminate being formed by laminating a plurality of thin sheets in a widthwise direction or a peripheral direction of a tire is incorrect.

Additionally, in Ladouce, the portion to be molded is the sidewall. The recessed portions (namely, flat surface (11) in the frustoconical face (12)) are provided in the mold. A

strip (20) consists of an elongated, spirally wound, metal sheet, not thin sheets. As shown by Fig. 2 of Ladouce, the configuration obtained after the strip (20) is spirally wound does not teach, nor can it reasonably be considered to have suggested, laminating the thin sheets having rectangular cross section so as to bring the thin sheets on the side of contacting with a tire stepping face to be placed along a profile of a tire crown portion.

The Office Action concedes that Ladouce does not teach a step of removing excess portions by means of a shot blast. The Office Action relies on Espie to remedy this shortfall. However, Espie does not teach, nor can it reasonably be considered to have suggested, removing excess portions of laminated thin sheets exceeding the profile of the tire crown portion by means of a shot blast. Rather, Espie merely mentions that a shot blast may be used for carrying out a surface treatment on an insert.

Claim 12 recites, among other features, laminating the thin sheets having rectangular cross-sections so as to bring the thin sheets on the side of contacting with the stepping face to be placed along the profile of the tire crown portion and, after laminating the thin sheets, excess portions of respective thin sheets exceeding the profile of the tire crown portion are removed by means of a shot blast. Carrying out a surface treatment on an insert cannot reasonably be considered to correspond to removing excess portions of laminated thin sheets exceeding the profile of the tire crown portion.

Additionally, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to combine the references in the manner suggested. As can be seen from comparison between Fig. 2 of the present application and that of Ladouce, because the Ladouce configuration, which has been obtained after the strip was spirally wound, is not formed along a profile of a desired tire portion, the purported addition of the shot blast would not be effective in bringing the profile of the strip to follow that of the side portion. In other words, a shot blast would merely smooth the shape of the surface obtained after the strip has been spirally wound. As

such, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to replace the machining of the edges in Ladouce, with a shot blast, as taught by Espie.

Wood is not applied in a manner to overcome any of the above-identified shortfalls regarding the combination of Ladouce and Espie.


For at least the above reasons, the applied prior art references do not teach, nor can they reasonably be considered to have suggested, the combination of all of the features positively recited in independent claim 12. Additionally, claims 13, 14, 18 and 22-25 are also neither taught, nor would they have been suggested, by the applied prior art references for at least the respective dependence of these claims, directly or indirectly, on independent claim 12, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recites.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 12-14, 18 and 22-25 over any combination of the applied prior art references are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 12-29 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:

Petition for Extension of Time

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